

The Clarence Book Review Club stages “The Bully Pulpit”.

3/20/15

Back in February, a very excited Bob Poczik called me with an idea that involved the Clarence Book Review Club, Msgr. Fred Leising, and the Book “*The Bully Pulpit*” by Doris Kearns Goodwin. The Book Review Club was established in 1969 by a small group of women who felt that Clarence would profit from having a book review club to serve as a forum for discussing worthwhile books, especially books by local authors. Those intrepid founders of the club would be very surprised and pleased to see that the club is thriving 46 years later, and currently has over 140 members. That runs counter to the usual trend where long-time groups diminish over time as the membership ages. This club is very well run and obviously fills an important need in the community. That meetings take place in the Town Park Clubhouse, a wonderful historic setting, adds to the spirit of the club. What Msgr. Leising and Bob Poczik had in mind was to stage a debate between William Howard Taft and Teddy Roosevelt in front of the book club, with the principals dressed in period costume. The debate would be based on the Bully Pulpit, with lunch served shortly thereafter. Inspired madness! If you know Msgr. Leising and Bob, these ideas spring from their endlessly creative minds on a regular basis. Poczik is well known for his speeches on a vast variety of subjects, which he gives to organizations including the Town of Clarence Senior Center. So, when he called, I immediately said yes to their excellent idea. And, if you were lucky enough to be there, you would have had the chance to see it all play out in front of an audience of over 100 people who enjoyed it as much as Msgr. Leising and Bob Poczik enjoyed putting the show together. Barbara Long did a great job of decorating the Clubhouse in red, white and blue, and even arranged for member Curt Holmes to play music of the period on the piano. The program closed with the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of America the Beautiful. It was altogether a fine, patriotic program that helped everyone present better understand and appreciate an important part of our nation’s history. If you missed the reading of the Bully Pulpit, both Bob Poczik and Msgr. Leising will be talking their show on the road, performing the same story for those groups and individuals that missed it the first time around. If you are a student of American history and would like to see an amazing depiction of brass knuckle politics circa 1900, don’t miss this exciting performance! My thanks to Robert Poczik for his help in putting this story together. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at 741-8930, email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us or stop by the Supervisors office in Town Hall. My door is always open!